(b) and (c) No, Sir. However, Airports Authority of India (AAI) has plans for extension of the runway at Raipur airport to make it suitable for A-320 type of aircraft without pay-load penalty and also for the provision of instrument landing system for operation in instrument meteorological conditions.

Planes with IA

2802. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of planes operating in Indian Airlines;

(b) the new planes ordered by Indian Airlines which are yet to be delivered; and

(c) the details of the plans of Indian Airlines for strengthening the fleet by 2010?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) At present, Indian Airlines and Alliance Air operate a fleet of 67 aircrafts.

(b) Indian Airlines has not placed any order for acquisition of new aircraft.

(c) Indian Airlines has plans to acquire 43 new aircrafts comprising A-319, A-320 and A-321 by way of replacement of the aircraft A-300 and B-737-200 in its fleet in a phased manner as well as to cater to the projected traffic growth in the next five years. In additions, the airlines goes for dry lease of aircraft to cater to short term requirements, which is an ongoing process.

Services from Thiruvananthapuram Airport

2803. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of foreign countries to which the budget airlines propose to conduct services from Thiruvananthapuram International Airport;

(b) the reasons for exempting services in Thiruvananthapuram-Dubai Sector and whether Government would consider to start services in this sector; and

(c) the precentage of concession in airfares in the Gulf route following the introduction of budget airlines and whether Government would consider any further relaxations or concessions thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Air India Express, a wholly owned subsidiary of Air India, propose to operate from Thiruvananthapuram to Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Muscat in the first phase.

(b) Air India Express is offering services to Dubai from Thiruvananthapuram via Calicut/Kochi. Besides, Air India would also continue to operate on Thiruvananthapuram-Dubai-Tiruvananthapuram sector as at present.

(c) Air India Express plans to offer fares up to 50% lower than the market fare depending upon demand and seasonality.

Bilateral Air Agreement with France

2804. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has amended its Air Bilateral Agreement with France to facilitate the private air carriers of India to fly to France;

(b) whether similar agreements are in the pipeline to allow the Indian private airlines to fly to other destinations of the world;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) how many bilateral agreements India has now with France following this amendment to Air Bilateral Agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) : (a) to (c) Existing bilateral air services arrangements with France were modified during bilateral air services consultations on 22-23 February, 2005 to enhance capacity entitlements for operation of air services and also to provide for designation of multiple airlines. Many of India's Air Services Agreements already provide for designation of more than one airline and such agreements do not need any modification for operation of eligible Indian carriers. Action is taken to amend Air Services Agreements not providing for multiple designation as